

## Laundry Routine

Here is a suggested routine to assist you during the day. Please feel free to personalize these suggestions.

**History:** Families in the 1800s washed all laundry by hand. This represented a major chore for women, which they commonly chose to perform on Mondays, perhaps to clean up Sunday clothes and dinner linens. Wash day activities often involved the whole family. The man or older sons of the house carried water pumped from the well and built a fire for heating it. The mother and older girls soaked and boiled the clothes then scrubbed them on washboards. After thoroughly rinsing, bluing, starching and wringing out the clothes, they hung them on a line to dry. When the clothes had dried, the women prepared them for ironing by sprinkling them with water and rolling them up.

Ironing was a long, hot process of heating heavy flat irons on top of the stove, testing the heat with a finger, and then pressing the rolled and dampened clothes. When the iron began to cool after several passes over the damp garments, housewives and their helpers exchanged it for another hot iron. They repeated this process for hours at a time. The laundry process often included making soap with potash (water filtered through wood ashes) and rendered animal fat. Rendered animal fat is fat separated from bone and protein. It's purified and can be used in candles, soap, cooking grease, or lard.

### Arrival of Students

- **Welcome** students. Exchange introductions.
- **Explain** that today they will be doing laundry, but first talk about how housework got done.
- **Explain** that each day of the week was set aside for a specific purpose Monday was laundry, Tuesday was ironing, Wednesday was mending and sewing, Thursday was market day, Friday was cleaning, Saturday was baking, and Sunday was for resting, visiting and church.
- **Ask** students why a whole day was needed to do each chore. (Everything took a long time to do before modern inventions made it easier to do these tasks. The first washing machine powered by an electric motor was patented in 1910.)
- **Explain** that each person would probably have one everyday outfit, and one school outfit. When children came home from school they changed into their everyday outfit for chores. They might also have one outfit for special occasions. The special outfit got washed only four or five times a year.
- **Show** the students pictures of clothing.
- **Explain** that cleanliness was very important.
- **Show** students the wash board, demonstrate how one's knuckles would get red and scraped looking. This was a good sign because it showed that you took good care of your family.

- **Show** the students how bluing was added to the next tub with the dasher to make the clothes very white.
- **Explain** to the students how cuffs and collars were removed and changed often. It was OK if dirt got on your clothes, but the cuffs and collars had to be clean and white. Aprons were useful because they helped keep dresses clean.
- **Explain** that on school days mothers would do the laundry while children were at school. During the summer, children were expected to help with the laundry.

### **Doing Laundry**

- To use the washboard station an adult must pour warm water into the first two tubs. Children can add the cold water from the pump. Make sure to put another pail of water on the stove for the next group.
- **Explain** to the students that they must kneel behind the washboard and scrub hard to do a good job.
- The dasher should be used to get the soap out of the clothes.
- Clothes are put through the wringer. **The wringer must be supervised by an adult.**
- Show students how to hang clothes properly.
- Clothes that are already dry can be taken down and ironed. **This station must be supervised carefully. Only parents are allowed to remove the iron from the stove.**
- When the activity is almost over students can pour out the dirty water by the green hand pump into the woodchips. **Students continue to rotate through the laundry station and work hard until just a few minutes before the bell rings. This is an all day chore!**
- When the bell rings line up your students and take them to the woodworking station.
- **Students are not allowed to go to the next station without a parent.**

### **End of the day**

- Please dry out the tubs and stack them next to the door of the summer kitchen.
- Gather all equipment used during the activity and put it next to the summer kitchen.
- Leave wet clothes on the line to dry. Check the ground for clothespins.
- Thank you for keeping our facilities clean.